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Smuts Hall renaming marks a new moment for UCT since #RhodesMustFall

CHAIR'S DESK: [Full message by the UCT Chair of Council, Babalwa Ngonyama.](#)

SOUND BITE: [Audio version by UCT spokesperson, Elijah Moholola.](#)

The renaming process for Smuts Hall residence marks a new moment for the University of Cape Town (UCT) and indicates how far the institution has come – under the current executive leadership – since the time of #RhodesMustFall.

The UCT Council approved the name change at their meeting held on Saturday, 19 June 2021. Council deliberated and approved a recommendation of the Naming of Buildings Committee to change the name of Smuts Hall, the student residence on the upper campus.

This decision of Council takes immediate effect in that the name Smuts Hall will be removed from the residence and in the interim the name Upper Campus Residence will be used until the process of determining a new name is formally concluded.

UCT Chair of Council Babalwa Ngonyama said: “The utter pain and anguish at the time of the decision to remove the Rhodes statue from campus was significant.

“And yet, we have as a campus moved closer to a community that can speak with one another, can acknowledge the complexities of the past but honour its gifts, can engage each other to come to new names of campus spaces that we feel is more representative of our current values and who we are as an inclusive collective.

“Whilst we have varied perspectives and diverse backgrounds and opinions, we are able to see and collectively forge a more inclusive future and shared identity.”

Council’s decision will allow UCT to move on from the past while continuing to recognise the significance of our legacy. There are many creative possibilities for reimagining the UCT campus in ways that will build inclusivity and look to the future. Over the coming months,

UCT will be holding discussions across the campus community about the new name for the Upper Campus Residence, as well as for other buildings.

Ngonyama added: "The changing of names should not be seen as merely replacing what we do not like with what we feel resonates well with us or what we feel we relate better to. It should go beyond the view that the name we are changing is a source of discomfort or pain for those advocating for change. Nor should it be viewed as an act of diminishing, discarding or deviating from history by those who would wish that the status quo should remain."

She emphasised that this should be seen as an opportunity for the UCT community to forge a new path together, towards creating an environment of inclusivity and shared identity on campus.

"An environment where all members of the campus community feel represented by, and can reflect on and relate to the buildings, spaces and symbols on campus. Collectively, we can all help in efforts to continue creating an environment on our campus that is increasingly inclusive and reflective of the growing diversity in our campus community."

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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